

"OFFICERS ARE GENTLEMEN" DRAWS FULL HOUSE

Every seat at the Playhouse was taken at Tuesday's opening of "Officers Are Gentlemen," a new comedy by David Snow of Cohasset that needs more plot substance to rate as top entertainment. Monotonous in places, this production reached its most hilarious moments in the final scenes, which left the departing clients satisfied.

Action takes place in 1944 in a flat in Sydney, Australia. One of two sisters, Helen Webster, is played by Ruth Coffin who turns in another superb performance, this time as a dutiful housewife who sticks to her knitting, while her husband is off fighting Japs. Jean Landry, played by Phyllis Mahon, is much less convincing as the frivolous widow whose husband's disappearance is never clearly understood by the audience. Jean has a yen for uniforms, whether worn by pebble-pushers or colonels, and any man within whistling distance has a better-than-even chance with her. Anne Barker impersonates a sweet six-year-old who is whisked off into bed every time Mamma entertains a step-father prospect. She goes beautifully. Poised and natural, she made a definite hit with the audience.

In the first act, what appear to be random characters sashay around the stage, pausing now and then to guzzle some of the Colonel's scotch. One of the officers seems to have a purpose in life—searching for some missing papers that have something momentous to do with "Operation Bloodhound." The build-up is weak, but from this point on audience in-

terest is heightened, especially, when the daughter finds a sergeant asleep in her mother's bed. The mother is worried, the colonel furious and the daughter puzzled. The sergeant is none of these things. He is merely sleeping off an innocent drunk. People are still looking for documents when the curtain drops.

The outstanding performer is Ned McCloskey, who portrays in a masterful way a pompous colonel who gives the impression he has an "in" with God when the General isn't around. The play perks up when he comes out of the wings. He gives it the kind of punch it needs.

Joanne Platt, cast as Doris Childs (a goon with a built-in come-hither-ish-look) draws laughs even when her super-dynamic personality isn't too exaggerated. A touch of restraint would improve her performance. John Blaisdell does a competent, relaxed job in his role as Captain Pembroke, one of the Colonel's stooges. The best moments of the evening are provided by Sgt. Tony Madden, played by Charles Cavanaugh, when he gives the Colonel and two other officers the business. Stephen Platt as Lieutenant Perry Miller is excellent considering his brief role.

If you aren't too impatient with parts of the first two acts, you'll be glad you went, and during the lulls there are the settings, really well done, to be admired.

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